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# HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

URGING THE HAWAII TOURISM AUTHORITY TO COORDINATE WITH THE  
HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, CORPORATION FOR TRAVEL PROMOTION, AND  
HAWAII'S CONGRESSIONAL DELEGATION TO AMEND THE H-1B VISA  
LAW TO ALLOW FOR EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH CULTURAL AND  
LANGUAGE SKILLS THAT WILL HELP CREATE A MORE WELCOMING  
ENVIRONMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL VISITORS.

1 WHEREAS, the tourism industry constitutes the largest  
2 single contributor to the State's gross domestic product,  
3 representing approximately twenty-one percent of its economy;  
4 and  
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6 WHEREAS, the United States Congress passed the Travel  
7 Promotion Act of 2009 that established the Corporation for  
8 Travel Promotion with the power, among other duties, to:

9 (1) Provide useful information to foreign tourists  
10 interested in traveling to the United States;

11 (2) Maximize the economic and diplomatic benefits of  
12 travel to the United States by promoting the United  
13 States to world travelers; and

14 (3) Ensure that international travel benefits all states  
15 and identify opportunities and strategies to promote  
16 tourism to international travelers; and  
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18 WHEREAS, Hawaii's top four visitor markets, which have  
19 traditionally been the western United States, eastern United  
20 States, Japan, and Canada, now include the emerging Other Asia  
21 tourism markets of China, Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and  
22 Singapore, which has increased by 16.5 percent; and  
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1 WHEREAS, it is important for the State to diversify its  
2 visitor markets so that weakness in a particular market at any  
3 given time can be offset by strength in another; and  
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5 WHEREAS, nonstop air service to Hawaii has grown  
6 significantly from Asia recently, including re-established  
7 service from Taipei, new service from Beijing, and expanded  
8 service from Shanghai; and  
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10 WHEREAS, fostering a visitor environment that is welcoming  
11 to any cultural group requires a visitor industry work force  
12 that is well-versed in the language, culture, customs, and  
13 expectations of that culture; and  
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15 WHEREAS, while the hospitality industry in Hawaii has  
16 gained valuable insights and experience regarding the  
17 preferences and expectations of Japanese travelers and has  
18 worked diligently to create a welcoming environment for them, an  
19 important factor in the evolution of the Hawaii visitor industry  
20 in creating a more welcoming environment for international  
21 visitors, including visitors from the Other Asia tourism market,  
22 is the availability of people who understand the culture and  
23 mores of the foreign visitor and have the skills to read, write,  
24 and speak with foreign visitors at an honorific level; and  
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26 WHEREAS, the H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows  
27 a United States company to employ a foreign individual who has a  
28 high degree of specialized knowledge in a "specialty occupation"  
29 for up to six years; and  
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31 WHEREAS, the description of "specialized occupation" under  
32 the H-1B visa does not include employees with cultural  
33 qualifications and skills in reading, writing, and speaking in  
34 the language of international visitors; and  
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36 WHEREAS, the H-1B visa law requires amendments before the  
37 hospitality industry may hire more employees who are fluent in  
38 the languages of international visitors, with the cultural,  
39 reading, and writing skills to communicate with international  
40 visitors; now, therefore,  
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42 BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the  
43 Twenty-eighth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular  
44 Session of 2015, the Senate concurring, that the Hawaii Tourism



1 Authority is urged to coordinate with the hospitality industry,  
2 Corporation for Travel Promotion, and Hawaii's congressional  
3 delegation to create a more welcoming environment for  
4 international visitors; and  
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6 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Hawaii's congressional  
7 delegation is requested to seek amendments to the H-1B non-  
8 immigrant visa law to amend the definition of "specialized  
9 occupation" to include foreign workers who have a high degree of  
10 specialized knowledge of reading, writing, and speaking at an  
11 honorific level to international visitors with an understanding  
12 and respect required in visitors' countries of origin to allow  
13 Hawaii's visitor industry to recruit and employ the necessary  
14 work force to realize these objectives; and  
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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that certified copies of this  
17 Concurrent Resolution be transmitted to the Governor, Interim  
18 President and Chief Executive Officer of the Hawaii Tourism  
19 Authority, Chief Executive Officer of the Corporation for Travel  
20 Promotion, and Hawaii's congressional delegation.

